

Message Text

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ORIGIN HEW-06

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TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY

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TAGS: TPHY, OSCI, TBIO, IN

SUBJECT: DHEW/PHS/NIH/SFCP - OFFICIAL TRAVEL OF DR.
CHARLES SHEPARD

PASS TO ACTING SCIATT TERESITA SCHAFFER

1. EMBASSY ADVISED DR. CHARLES SHEPARD, VIROLOGY DIVISION, BUREAU OF LABORATORIES, CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL, PLANS TRIP TO INDIA. HE PLANS TO MEET WITH DR. GOPALAN OF THE ICMR AND WITH SEVERAL SCIENTISTS CONCERNING US-INDIA JOINT COLLABORATION IN LEPROSY RESEARCH AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR REGULAR JOINT RESEARCH CONFERENCES.

2. SHORTLY AFTER THE BILATERAL AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED ON OCTOBER 28, 1974, AND GOPALAN VISITED NIH IN CONNECTION WITH POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES OF THE PROJECTED SUBCOMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, HE EXPRESSED AN INTENSE INTEREST
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IN COLLABORATING WITH NIH ON LEPROSY RESEARCH AMONG OTHER DISEASES. THIS DESIRE WAS REAFFIRMED IN HIS LETTER OF JANUARY 25, 1977 TO DR. FREDRICKSON WHO OFFERED HIS ASSISTANCE IN ESTABLISHING SUCH COLLABORATION. NIH HAS EXPENDED MUCH STAFF TIME ON THIS SUBJECT. ALTHOUGH NIH HAS HAD TO OPERATE UNDER SEVERE RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL, A DHEW TEAM OF FIVE EXPERTS

REPRESENTING THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH, CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL, AND HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION WAS SENT TO INDIA IN MARCH 1976 TO ASSESS THE POTENTIAL AND ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS IN THE AREA OF MYCOBACTERIAL DISEASES AND SPECIFICALLY LEPROSY. NO PROPOSALS HAVE RESULTED FROM THIS VISIT. FOLLOWING DISCUSSIONS WITH DR. GOPALAN DURING THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENT MEETING IN JULY 1977, NIH ALSO SENT A TEAM OF TWELVE SCIENTISTS REPRESENTING NIH STAFF, CDC STAFF, HSA STAFF, AND INTERESTED SCIENTISTS FROM UNIVERSITIES, TO DEVELOP RESEARCH COLLABORATION IN THE AREA OF LEPROSY. A CRITERION FOR THE SELECTION OF US SCIENTISTS TO ATTEND THIS MEETING WAS A COMMITMENT ON THEIR PART TO: FIRST, IDENTIFY POTENTIALLY PRODUCTIVE LINES OF SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION; SECOND, GIVE INDIAN SCIENTISTS THE BENEFIT OF THEIR EXPERIENCE IN WRITING ADEQUATELY DESIGNED RESEARCH PROPOSALS BY WORKING WITH THEIR COUNTERPARTS WHILE IN INDIA TO DEVELOP THEIR IDEAS TO THE POINT WHERE THEY WOULD MEET THE NEEDS OF US TECHNICAL MERIT REVIEW GROUPS; THIRD, AGREE TO SERVE AS A COLLABORATOR ON THESE PROJECTS.

3. DESPITE THIS WORKING SESSION AND THE FOUR YEAR DIALOGUE WHICH NIH HAS HAD WITH GOPALAN AND FINANCED FOR DHEW ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COLLABORATIVE LEPROSY PROGRAM WITH INDIA, ONLY TWO RESEARCH PROPOSALS IN THIS AREA HAVE BEEN UNCLASSIFIED

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RECEIVED, ONE OF WHICH (VAIDYA, AIMS, 01-131-N) WAS SUPPORTED UNILATERALLY BY THE ICMR AFTER NIH HAD SPENT THE MONEY FROM ITS LIMITED TRAVEL CEILING TO SEND THE U.S. COLLABORATOR FROM HSA TO INDIA TO HELP WRITE IT.

4. AT THIS POINT NIH BELIEVES THE INITIATIVE RESTS WITH GOPALAN AND IS NOT CONVINCED THAT HE WILL BE ACTIVE IN DEVELOPING A MAJOR COLLABORATIVE EFFORT ON LEPROSY DURING THE REMAINING TWO YEARS OF HIS TENURE. HOWEVER, IN VIEW OF DR. CHARLES SHEPARD'S PRESUMED RAPPORT WITH GOPALAN, NIH HAS AGREED TO SUPPORT HIS TRIP TO INDIA FOR CONSULTATION WITH DR. DESIKAN TO WHOM GOPALAN HAS APPARENTLY ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITY FOR COORDINATING THE LEPROSY COLLABORATION. NIH BELIEVES THAT A DISCUSSION BETWEEN DRS. SHEPARD, GOPALAN, AND DESIKAN IS NOW THE ONLY WAY IN WHICH THE LEPROSY COLLABORATION CAN BE ACTIVATED. HE WILL ALSO VISIT DR. KOTICHA AT THE ACWORTH LEPROSY HOSPITAL IN BOMBAY WITH WHOM DR. SHEPARD IS ATTEMPTING TO DEVELOP A COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM THROUGH CDC CHANNELS. BOTH NIH AND THE HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION ARE REVIEWING A PROPOSAL FROM DR. RAMESH KAMAT IN BOMBAY. ALTHOUGH THIS PROPOSAL HAS SERIOUS TECHNICAL DEFICIENCIES, NIH IS ASKING DR. SHEPARD

TO REVIEW THESE WITH DR. KAMAT AND ADVISE HIM ON FURTHER ACTION WHILE IN BOMBAY.

5. ETA NEW DELHI MARCH 19 VIA PA 2 AT 1:30. ETD DELHI VIA IC 481 MARCH 19 AT 1845 FOR AGRA WITH ETA 1930. ETD AGRA MARCH 22 AT 2205 VIA IC 482 FOR DELHI. ETD DELHI MARCH 23 AT 2100 VIA IC 184 FOR BOMBAY WITH ETA 2245. ETD BOMBAY MARCH 24 VIA 183 AT 1815 FOR DELHI WITH ETA AT 2000. ETD DELHI MARCH 25 AT 0500 VIA PA 1. IN LINE WITH THIS ITINERARY SHEPARD REQUESTS EMBASSY MAKE HOTEL RESERVATIONS IN DELHI FOR NIGHTS OF MARCH 18, MARCH 22, AND MARCH 24. HOTEL RESERVATIONS REQUESTED IN AGRA MARCH 19-21 INCLUSIVE AND IN BOMBAY FOR MARCH 23. EMBASSY REQUESTED LEAVE MESSAGE WITH PANAM AT AIRPORT GIVING NAME OF HOTEL UNCLASSIFIED

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IN DELHI WHERE RESERVATION HAS BEEN MADE.

6. USDO AUTHORIZED ADVANCE PER DIEM AND \$50.00 FOR MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES. SHEPARD HAS REQUESTED THAT SAXENA ACCOMPANY HIM ON THIS TRIP. IF THIS IS POSSIBLE, SAXENA COULD DELIVER SHEPHERD'S FUNDS TO HIM ON MARCH 19 WHEN THEY LEAVE FOR AGRA.

7. FISCAL DATA: TO N-045999, APPROPRIATION 75X1102, ALLOTMENT 8-A731801; 01045999/OD, 21.22.

8. NIH REQUESTS CONCURRENCE OR NOTIFICATION IF TRIP IS INAPPROPRIATE. VANCE

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